

New and Interesting Facts from Science and Life

How Your VOICE, WALK and Gestures Tell WHAT You ARE

WHY is the devil portrayed as clothed in red and enveloped in flame?

What is the "heat of passion," and the "fire of love?"

How can we become "broken-hearted," "dumb with amazement," "choked with rage," "breathless with suspense," or "burn with shame?" What makes us give a "sigh of relief?"

Why do we express a sense of disgust or of bad taste by instinctively turning away the head, making a wry face, or by thrusting out the hands, with the palms turned outward?

What is more suggestive of the "I-should-worry" attitude than a shrug of the shoulders?

Why can an innocent man look you straight in the eyes, and why does a guilty person hang his head?

We say that an honest man is "upright," or "straight"; that a dishonest person is "crooked," and a deceitful one is "shamefaced."

Why?

Dr. Trilant Burrow of Baltimore answers these and other questions of a similar nature by showing how "medicine" now includes among its data expressions indicative of the demands of the instinctive life, and takes cognizance at last of such "real factors as the hunger of the human heart," not in any rhapsodic literary sense, but lifted out of its poetic context and transposed to its

rightful setting amid the archives of science.

"Our human forms of expression," says Dr. Burrow, "are roundabout expedients, symbolic substitutions and evasions with which we seek to mitigate the poignancy of actuality."

"By tracing back to the earliest sources, we find that the language of primitive man was mimetic. Man's earliest attempts toward communication or the establishment of associations consisted of movements of mimicry or imitation, whether vocal or gestural. The stages of this pantomimic speech of prehistoric man are directly traceable in many of the linguistic forms of present day usage. Vocal mimicry is represented today by such words that imitate the original sound of the object described, as for example, the 'tick' of a clock, the 'rustling' of leaves, the 'bubbling' of a spring, the 'click' of a latch, or the 'humming' of an insect."

"This primitive language of the race is equally preserved in the gestural symbols with which we today express our thoughts—symbols in which we find the origin of the early drama."

"We make a wry face, turn away the head, or thrust out the hands, with the palms averted to express disgust or bad taste. We show our unconcern by an expressive shrug of the shoulders. And why? Because this dramatic movement is a mimetic

symbol for throwing off the burden of responsibility. Primitive man carried his burden on his shoulders—his fuel, his food, his offspring. His shoulders then were not light, not free. They were borne down by these man's elemental cares. And so in this familiar shrug of the shoulders there are retained the phyllogenic traces of the primitive language of our forebears. And man today expresses through this symbol his freedom from concern or his indifference, as we say, 'If we turn to the study of the more obviously biologic medium of language—to the expressions of the emotions in men and animals as pointed out by Darwin, the organic appropriateness of these reactions becomes more evident still."

"We see, then, that language is not haphazard or arbitrary. We see that a dynamic element underlies its

manifestations, that it is actuated from the inner necessity of organic law, that it is prehistoric, inherent, unconscious, physiologic. Because of this organic inheritance of our unconscious language, its testimony is indisputable."

"We are enabled to judge the characters of men through their use of such unconscious mimetic expressions. The honest man looks you calmly in the eye. He does so in response to a law of his very nature. Out of obedience to this same law, we in turn 'call such a man 'upright,' 'straight.' Conversely, from the same organic necessity, the deceitful man, as we say, 'shamefaced.' He must perforce crouch and turn aside. He dares not confront you squarely, and for such a man the popular epithet 'crooked'."

"Thus, everything that a man is is

What Causes the FIRE of LOVE, HEAT of PASSION and HUNGER of the Human HEART



Disgust Is Shown by Turning Away the Head, Making a Wry Face and Thrusting Out the Hands.



Unconcern Is Expressed by Shrugging the Shoulders, a Symbol of Throwing Off the Burden of Responsibility.



Man Still Crouches in Fear as Did His Prehistoric Ancestors When Warding Off an Impending Peril.

The following words are examples of vocal mimicry by suggesting the original sound of the effect described:

bang	gurgle
babble	hum
biff	jingle
bubble	murmur
buzz	rip
click	roar
clang	rumble
clash	rustle
ding	sough
dong	splash

what, on a superficial view, could be more utterly dissimilar than a red light and the means of livelihood adopted by certain members of the 'submerged tenth'? Even the suggestion is bold, flagrant and shocking. It blazes the unpleasant, ruthlessly dragging before us the existence of a condition in society on which a moral stigma has been placed. The moral repugnance here entailed is patent enough. We, therefore, use instead a symbol which in its remoteness is quite harmless.

"What could offer less outrage to our sensibilities than the concept 'red light'? What could be more free from any immoral connotation? And so, when the church, society or the press wishes to speak of evil resorts, it has recourse to this disguised and innocuous metaphor of the 'red light,' and with due regard for the proprieties, it henceforth refers with an unruffled calm to the 'red light district.'"

"But let us see. Is this symbol as innocent as it appears? Is it, after all, so remote, so arbitrary; or does it prove on analysis to be connected with the concept for which it stands by reason of that organic correlation of which we have spoken? If we will look into the history of the social consciousness as expressed in the different spheres of symbolism, in folk-lore, religion, literature and mythology, we find that redness and warmth are the universal symbols of passion. For example, we speak of the 'heat of passion,' and the 'fire of love.' You remember the symbol of the 'Scarlet Letter,' or more closely still, the 'scarlet woman,' and the devil himself, the mythological symbol under which bestial appetites are personified, is invariably pictured as clothed in red and as enveloped in flame."

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"To take a quite familiar example:

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"Bulwer Lytton was psychologist enough to use for a dramatic purpose this unconscious evidence of an inner organic disharmony. You recall in his play, 'Richelieu,' how he makes the old cardinal save himself from death at the hands of assassins by detecting at the critical moment just such a discrepancy on the part of his trusted servant-in-waiting. As the servant makes his usual obeisance and retires for the night, Richelieu, with quick intuition, perceives some difference in his demeanor—there is something unfamiliar—and turning to his secretary he says, 'Joseph, he bowed too low.' This man was harboring in his bosom a treacherous design. In his effort to conceal it he overdid his deference, and in this very act betrayed himself."

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